
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Innovating Education: Strengthening Teacher Competence Through Technology-Enhanced Instruction

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| ABSTRACT

The research focused on the utilization of educational technology in teaching and its impact on teachers' instructional competence and effectiveness. It emphasized the significance of integrating technology in the 21st-century educational landscape to enhance learning outcomes. The study, conducted with 341 teachers in a district in China, revealed that effective technology integration enriches teaching practices, fosters student engagement, and improves academic growth, particularly highlighted during the pandemic. Findings showed a positive correlation between technology use and teachers' instructional effectiveness. The study advocates for continuous professional development to enhance teachers' technological skills, asserting that educational technology is a transformative force in modern education, enriching the learning experience and improving accessibility.

| KEYWORDS

Educational technology, display instructional competence, and achieve teaching effectiveness

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

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Introduction

The integration of technological tools is significantly transforming education, expanding learning beyond traditional classrooms through mobile devices and online platforms. This shift, supported by research indicating a global movement toward technology in education, highlights the necessity for supportive institutional frameworks. Effective technology integration requires reimagining instructional methods to prioritize student learning outcomes and fostering holistic development. However, challenges remain, particularly regarding teachers' readiness and skills in using ICT effectively. Teachers are pivotal in aligning technology with pedagogical practices, as their competence impacts the success of educational reforms. The study aims to investigate how teachers in a district in China engage with educational technology and its relationship to their instructional effectiveness, contributing to discussions on enhancing teaching and learning outcomes through innovation.

Educational technology is the strategic integration of scientific and technological insights into teaching and learning, designed to improve educational effectiveness. Traditional lecture-based methods may disengage students, while technology enables interactive, dynamic learning experiences. This discipline merges learning sciences with pedagogy, focusing on developing, implementing, and assessing tools and methodologies that support educational goals. Key principles include utilizing technology to shape behavior, acknowledging learning as a process, and promoting experiential learning.

Moreover, the design of engaging learning environments, methods that foster critical thinking, and recognition of student diversity are essential elements. The integration of technology not only enhances learning for diverse age groups but also addresses historical adoption challenges in education.

Educational technology encompasses various tools, including mobile devices and e-learning platforms, facilitating personalized, accessible learning experiences. Teachers' continuous professional development and positive attitudes toward technology are integral for effective implementation, as is recognizing the multifaceted nature of instruction.

Emerging practices like gamification leverage game mechanics to foster engagement and enhance learning outcomes, and both synchronous and asynchronous online learning modalities play a significant role in modern education.

Research highlights the positive impact of educational technology on student performance, particularly when combined with effective pedagogy. Effective online teaching practices focus on structured instruction and fostering social presence, ensuring that technology integration enriches learning experiences. Challenges such as resource availability and teacher preparedness in ICT further underline the necessity for comprehensive support and development in educational technology utilization.

Research Objectives

The central purpose of this study was to examine how teachers in the District utilize educational technology, display instructional competence, and achieve teaching effectiveness.

The specific objectives of the study were:

1. To describe the extent of teachers' utilization of educational technology.
2. To describe the degree to which teachers demonstrate instructional competence.
3. To describe the level of teaching effectiveness among teachers.
4. To determine the significant correlation between teachers' utilization of educational technology and their instructional competence.
5. To determine the significant relationship between teachers' utilization of educational technology and their teaching effectiveness.
6. To discover if there is a substantial association between teachers' instructional competence and their teaching effectiveness.
7. To propose strategies to strengthen teachers' use of educational technology, enhance instructional competence, and improve overall teaching effectiveness.

Methodology

Research Design

The study aimed to investigate the use of educational technology, assess instructional competence, and evaluate effectiveness among teachers in a District. A descriptive-correlational research design was utilized, enabling the exploration of relationships among variables without manipulation. A survey method gathered primary data directly from elementary school teachers in China for the 2020-2021 academic year, capturing their experiences with technology and instructional practices. Secondary data from scholarly literature supported the study's framework, helping to contextualize the findings.

Respondents of the Study

The study focused on a specific population of elementary school teachers within the District. From this population, a total of 341 teachers were selected as participants for the 2020-2021 academic year. The sample size was determined using Slovin's formula, considering a 5% margin of error, ensuring that the sample was representative of the overall teacher population. This approach provided sufficient statistical power to analyze correlations between variables and draw meaningful conclusions.

Instrument of the Study

A researcher-developed questionnaire was the main data collection tool, consisting of three parts: measuring educational technology utilization, assessing teachers' instructional competence, and evaluating perceived effectiveness. The instrument was validated through expert evaluations and modified for clarity and relevance, receiving final approval from the research advisor. Its reliability was confirmed via Cronbach's Alpha. The study aimed to explore the relationships between educational technology utilization, instructional competence, and teacher effectiveness, providing descriptive and analytical insights.

Data Gathering Procedure

The survey questionnaire was utilized as the primary data collection tool in this descriptive study, selected for its effectiveness in reaching a large number of respondents. A draft was prepared and reviewed for clarity and quality before securing permission from schools for distribution. The questionnaire was administered electronically via Google Forms, ensuring confidentiality and voluntary participation. Completed questionnaires were emailed to the researcher, and the collected data were organized and analyzed to extract insights related to the research objectives.

Treatment and Analysis of Data

Weighted Mean was employed to assess the levels of Utilization of Educational Technology, Teacher's Instructional Competence, and Effectiveness among the respondents.

Pearson correlation coefficient (r) was utilized to establish the relationships between the levels of Utilization of Educational Technology, Teacher's Instructional Competence, and Effectiveness among the respondents.

Results and Discussions

Table 1. The Teachers' Level of Utilization of Educational Technology

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. Explore educational websites like LRMDs, and others for curriculum-relevant contents to inform the lesson.	3.49	High	6.5
2. Explore educational websites like, LRMDs and others for adaptable educational resources like songs, videos, etc. to enrich the lesson.	3.49	High	6.5
3. Use computer applications such as MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint and others in planning, i.e. lesson plans, exemplars or weekly home learning plans.	3.72	Very High	1
4. Use computer applications such as MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint and others in assessing/evaluating learning i. e. activity sheets, written work or performance tasks.	3.66	Very High	3
5. Use computer applications such MS Word, Excel PowerPoint, and others in reporting i.e. record keeping, learners' profiles or learners' self-monitoring tools.	3.68	Very High	2
6. Use online software or apps like facebook, gmeet or zoom, and others to provide parents/guardians feedback on learners' progress.	3.64	Very High	4
7. Use online software or apps like facebook, gmeet or zoom and others to encourage and recognize parents/guardians contributions to learners' progress.	3.60	Very High	5
8. Use digital contents from LRMDs and others for required activities.	3.45	High	9.5
9. Use digital contents from LRMDs and others for activities.	3.45	High	9.5
10. Use basic creation, storage, and retrieval of teaching learning resources.	3.48	High	8
Average	3.56	Very High	

Table 1 showed that educators in the District demonstrate a high engagement with educational technology, as shown in the analysis. The highest utilization is reflected in Indicator 3 (use of MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint for lesson planning) with a weighted mean of 3.72. Indicator 5 (computer applications for reporting) follows closely with 3.68, and Indicator 4 (assessing learning via computer applications) scores 3.66. Other noteworthy indicators include the use of online platforms for parent feedback (4th, 3.64) and acknowledging parental contributions (5th, 3.60). The overall average weighted mean of 3.56 signifies a very high level of utilization. The findings highlight the importance of technology integration by teachers, facilitating enhanced

instructional efficiency and promoting individualized learning, supported by research emphasizing the need for educators to align technology with curricular goals and support lifelong learning practices.

Table 2. The Teachers' Level of Instructional Competence

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. Decide which educational websites like LRMDs, and others to use for curriculum-relevant contents to inform the lesson.	3.43	High	8
2. Evaluate which educational websites like LRMDs and others for adaptable educational resources like songs, videos, etc. to enrich the lesson.	3.40	High	10
3. Exhibit various skills in the use of computer applications such MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and others in planning i.e. lesson plans, exemplars or weekly home learning plans.	3.54	Very High	1
4. Exhibit various skills in the use of computer applications such MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint and others in assessing/evaluating learning i.e. activity sheets, written works, or performance tasks.	3.51	Very High	3
5. Exhibit various skills in the use of computer applications such MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint and others in reporting, i.e. record-keeping, management of ECD results, learners' profiles or learners' self-monitoring tools.	3.52	Very High	2
6. Maximize the use of online softwares or apps like facebook, gmeet, or zoom and others to provide parents/guardians feedback on learners' progress, or problem-solve when technical difficulties arise.	3.49	High	4
7. Maximize the use of online softwares or apps like facebook, gmeet, or zoom and others to encourage and recognize parents/guardians contributions to learners' progress.	3.48	High	5.5
8. Provide extended support for parents and learners in the integration of digital contents from LRMDs and others for independent practice.	3.45	High	7
9. Evaluate content and adaptability of digital contents from the LRMDs	3.41	High	9
10. Manage your own digital teaching-learning resources by creating, storing, and retrieving them with ease.	3.48	High	5.5
Average	3.47	High	

Table 2 showed the analysis of teachers' instructional competence indicated varied outcomes, showcasing both strengths and areas for growth. The highest-ranking indicator was the ability to utilize computer applications for planning instructional activities, achieving a weighted mean of 3.54. This highlights teachers' proficiency in integrating digital tools in instruction. Other strong indicators included the effective management of student data (3.52) and assessment techniques (3.51). While teachers showed high competence in leveraging technology, areas such as utilizing online platforms for parent engagement and adapting digital content received lower ratings, indicating potential for further improvement. The overall average weighted mean of 3.47 suggests a high instructional competence, aligning with research emphasizing the need for teacher preparation in integrating ICT into teaching. This integration fosters student engagement and enhances learning experiences.

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. The integration of dependable information from exploring educational websites like LRMDs, and others for curriculum-relevant contents informs the lesson and improve teacher awareness on diverse learner needs.	3.45	High	10
2. The use of educational songs, videos, etc. helps improve the learner's motivation, and potentials in reading and writing	3.60	Very High	2.5
3. The use of computer applications such as MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and others in planning, i.e. lesson plans, exemplars, or weekly home learning plans enhances the teacher's editing, self-checking and analytical functions with contents and formats.	3.62	Very High	1
4. The use of computer applications such as MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and other enhances the effectiveness of assessing/evaluating learning i.e. activity sheets or worksheets, written works or performance tasks.	3.60	Very High	2.5
5. The use of computer applications such as MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and others facilitates the reporting i.e. record-keeping, management of ECD results, learners' profiles, self-monitoring tools.	3.57	Very High	4.5
6. The sustained use of online softwares or apps like facebook, gmeet, or zoom and others to provide parents/guardians' feedback on learners' progress enhances teacher's collaboration skills or linkages with community.	3.57	Very High	4.5
7. The sustained use of online softwares or apps like facebook, gmeet, or zoom and others to encourage and recognize parents/guardians' contributions to learners' progress fosters meaningful communications with parents/guardians and with the learners alike.	3.53	Very High	7
8. The use resources from LRMDs, and others for required activities helps the learners express their thoughts better.	3.51	Very High	8
9. The use of digital contents from the LRMDs and others for independent practice provides for meaning full contents that help the learners improve their communication skills.	3.49	High	9
10. The digital contents and files managed by the teacher show evidence of learners' active engagement with the lessons and the learners' improved experiences.	3.54	Very High	6
Average	3.55	Very High	

Table 3 showed the analysis of Teachers' Level of Effectiveness indicates a very high level of effectiveness in their application of digital tools across multiple indicators. Indicator 3, concerning the use of applications like MS Word and Excel for planning, ranked first with a weighted mean of 3.62. Indicators focusing on educational multimedia and assessment practices both received a mean of 3.60, showcasing their ability to enhance student engagement. Additional indicators on reporting and online feedback achieved a mean of 3.57. The analysis highlights effective communication with parents and resource utilization to support independent learning. The overall average weighted mean of 3.55 signifies a strong pedagogical rationale supporting effective teaching practices, aligning with the notion that modern technologies enhance educational access and collaboration, making learning more adaptable and inclusive for 21st-century classrooms.

Table 4. Relationship between the Teachers' Level of Utilization of Educational Technology and their Level of Instructional Competence

Indicators	Pearson r value	p-value	Interpretation
Teachers' Level of Utilization of Educational Technology and their Level of Instructional Competence	0.746 Moderate correlation	0.000	Significant
Significance Level @ 0.01			

Table 4 showed that there is a significant correlation between teachers' usage of educational technology and their instructional competence, with a probability value of 0.000 indicating a strong positive relationship. As teachers use technology more, their competence improves. This supports Roslan's (2016) findings that proficient computer users view information systems as beneficial and are more confident in utilizing digital tools. Therefore, improving teacher acceptance and use of educational technology necessitates fostering positive attitudes and enhancing ICT competency, allowing for better instructional delivery and integration of digital tools in education.

Table 5. Relationship between the Teachers' Level of Utilization of Educational Technology and their Level of Effectiveness

Indicators	Pearson r value	p-value	Interpretation
Teachers' Level of Utilization of Educational Technology and their Level of Effectiveness	0.737 Moderate correlation	0.000	Significant
Significance Level @ 0.01			

Table 5 showed that there is significant correlation was found between teachers' use of educational technology and their effectiveness, with a probability value of 0.000 indicating that higher technology utilization boosts teacher effectiveness. This aligns with Warwick (2018), emphasizing the importance of ICT awareness among educators for engaging lessons. The study advocates for training programs to enhance teachers' ICT integration skills, which improves instructional delivery, fosters creativity, and strengthens critical thinking. Integrating ICT positions teachers as key facilitators in modern pedagogy, enhancing learning outcomes and promoting innovative approaches for 21st-century education.

Table 6. Relationship between the Teachers' Level of Instructional Competence and their Level of Effectiveness

Indicators	Pearson r value	p-value	Interpretation
Teachers' Level of Instructional Competence and their Level of Effectiveness	0.777 Moderate correlation	0.000	Significant
Significance Level @ 0.01			

Table 6 showed the analysis reveals a significant positive relationship (p-value 0.000) between teachers' instructional competence and effectiveness. Consistent with Jackson (2018), the study underscores the necessity for teachers to possess diverse competencies to enhance student learning outcomes. Effective instructional strategies and active teaching methods lead to improved student mastery, emphasizing the critical impact of teacher competence on educational success.

Conclusions

Based on the study's findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Teachers demonstrated a very high level of educational technology utilization.
2. Instructional competence among teachers was found to be at a high level.
3. Teachers' overall effectiveness was assessed as very high.

4. A significant positive correlation was found between teachers' use of educational technology and their instructional competence.
5. A positive relationship was established between teachers' utilization of educational technology and their teaching effectiveness.
6. A positive correlation was also observed between teachers' instructional competence and their overall effectiveness.
7. The comprehensive implementation of the proposed action plan is essential to further enhance the utilization of educational technology, strengthen instructional competence, and improve the teaching effectiveness of public school teachers in the selected District in China.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are formulated based on the findings and conclusions of this study:

1. Teachers should continuously strengthen their use of educational technology by exploring online resources such as LRMDs for curriculum-based content, applying computer applications like MS Word, Excel, and PowerPoint in lesson planning, assessment, and reporting, and integrating diverse digital materials into classroom activities.
2. Teachers must sustain a high level of instructional competence by showcasing proficiency in computer applications for planning, maximizing online tools for feedback, and developing the ability to troubleshoot technical challenges.
3. Strengthening the link between technology utilization and instructional competence is crucial. Teachers are encouraged to use technology with confidence, adopt learner-centered approaches, and design engaging and interactive learning environments.
4. The relationship between educational technology use and teaching effectiveness should also be emphasized. Teachers need to choose appropriate software, evaluate its relevance and impact, and master its application in various instructional contexts.
5. Recognizing the influence of instructional competence on effectiveness is essential. Teachers should ensure that technology integration, instructional materials, and assessment practices contribute meaningfully to effective teaching. Online tools further extend learning opportunities beyond time and place, while promoting interaction and collaboration among students and teachers.
6. The proposed action plan should be formally presented to school administrators for adoption and implementation.
7. Future research should be conducted to evaluate the impact of the action plan on improving teachers' use of educational technology, instructional competence, and teaching effectiveness.
8. Subsequent studies may expand the scope to include additional factors influencing the utilization of educational technology, instructional competence, and teaching effectiveness among teachers.

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